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## Durhams Regions New Hate Reporting Program” Is Orwellian Bureaucracy at Its Worst

Durham Region has launched what it calls a “Community-Based Hate Reporting Program,” and it is being sold to residents as a progressive step toward safety and inclusion. But I’m going to say what too many politicians are too afraid to say: this program is Orwellian, dangerous, and an insult to every Canadian who believes in freedom, due process, and democratic accountability. As a Pickering Councillor, I am 100% opposed to it, and I believe Durham residents should be outraged that taxpayer dollars are being used to create a system that encourages anonymous accusations, bureaucratic surveillance, and the quiet erosion of our rights.

Let’s be clear about something. Canada already has laws that deal with hate crimes. We already have a Criminal Code. We already have police services and courts that investigate and prosecute actual criminal conduct. Assault is illegal. Harassment is illegal. Threats are illegal. Vandalism is illegal. The promotion of hatred toward identifiable groups is illegal. If someone commits a crime, police can lay charges, evidence is reviewed, and the justice system determines guilt or innocence. That is how a free society functions. So the obvious question is this: what exactly is Durham Region solving here? Because there is no legal gap. There is no crisis that requires municipal staff to collect anonymous complaints about speech, opinions, “bias,” or interpersonal disagreements. This program doesn’t prevent violence, it doesn’t stop criminals, and it doesn’t make anyone safer. What it does do is create a government-run system for tracking allegations against ordinary residents without evidence, without verification, and without accountability.

The most alarming feature is that it encourages anonymous reporting. Think about the implications of that for even a moment. Anyone can report anyone. A neighbour feud. A workplace disagreement. A political argument. A social media comment. A complaint from someone who simply dislikes you. With a few clicks, an accusation can be filed, logged, analyzed, and stored. The accused may never even know it happened, and they will certainly never be given the opportunity to respond, defend themselves, or challenge the claim. That is not justice. That is not fairness. That is not Canadian. That is a system designed to normalize suspicion and fear, where the government quietly collects unverified allegations about its own citizens. And who is reviewing these complaints? Bureaucrats. Municipal staff. Victim services administrators. Unelected individuals who are not accountable to the public in any meaningful way. These are not police officers. These are not judges. These are not trained legal authorities. They are government employees being put in the position of deciding what qualifies as “hate,” what qualifies as “bias,” and what qualifies as a reportable “incident.” That is ideological policing by bureaucracy, and it is exactly how free societies begin to rot from within. People begin to self-censor. They stop speaking freely. They stop questioning. They stop criticizing government. They stop debating controversial topics. Not because they are guilty of a crime, but because they are afraid of being reported, labeled, and quietly added to a database.

Durham Region is now creating a government-held repository of unverified accusations about residents. We are told this is for “trend analysis,” but that phrase should alarm every thinking person. Governments do not build databases and then keep them small. They expand them. They integrate them. They share them. And they eventually justify their existence by claiming they need more power, more funding, and more authority. Today this program is presented as separate from other municipal services, but anyone who understands modern data systems knows how quickly that can change. Integration is not some far-fetched conspiracy. It is the natural evolution of government bureaucracy. A complaint logged today could become an internal profile tomorrow. A pattern of anonymous reports could become a “risk assessment.” And once a government begins collecting subjective accusations, the line between “public safety” and “citizen monitoring” disappears faster than people realize.

Even more disturbing is the complete lack of consequences for false reporting. There are no penalties. No accountability. No safeguards. In a real justice system, making false accusations can carry serious consequences. But in this program, anyone can anonymously accuse someone of being hateful, bigoted, or biased, and there is no legal consequence because it is not a formal criminal process. That means this program is wide open to abuse. It can be weaponized for revenge, harassment, and political targeting. And if you don’t think political targeting is possible in today’s climate, you haven’t been paying attention to what has happened across this country over the last several years, where dissent is increasingly treated as dangerous and disagreement is increasingly treated as hate.

This is where history matters. Because we have seen this before. Anyone who has studied Nazi Germany understands that authoritarianism did not begin with camps and uniforms. It began with propaganda, fear, and citizen reporting systems. It began with governments encouraging neighbours to report neighbours. It began with people being labeled as “problematic” or “dangerous” for speech, opinions, or associations. It began with the normalization of surveillance culture, justified in the name of “public good.” It began with bureaucrats collecting information and quietly building files. That is how totalitarian systems grow: not all at once, but step by step, policy by policy, database by database, until citizens no longer speak freely because they fear the consequences of being reported. That is why this program should not be dismissed as harmless. The infrastructure of authoritarianism is always built under the banner of safety and morality. That is exactly what makes it so dangerous.

And make no mistake, this program raises serious Charter concerns. Freedom of expression is not protected only when speech is popular. It is protected precisely because people must be allowed to hold and express opinions that others may dislike. Freedom of association matters because citizens must be able to gather, organize, and participate in public life without fear of being tracked. Privacy matters because the state should not be building databases about its residents based on anonymous allegations. Due process matters because no person should be accused, recorded, and categorized without being given a chance to respond. Even if Durham Region claims this is “non-criminal,” the chilling effect is the same. People will stop speaking. They will stop engaging. They will stop questioning. That is how democracy dies—not through force, but through fear and compliance.

And all of this is being done with taxpayer money—approximately \$89,000 over two years—for a program that does not stop crime and does not prosecute criminals. At a time when families are struggling to afford groceries, housing, and fuel, Durham Region has decided to spend public money creating a bureaucratic pipeline for anonymous complaints. That should outrage every resident, regardless of political affiliation. Government should be focused on real public safety, real crime prevention, and real support for victims—not building reporting portals that act as a mechanism for social control.

If Durham Region truly wanted to combat hate and violence, there are real solutions: stronger policing, better mental health supports, outreach programs, education initiatives, and direct support for vulnerable communities. But instead of focusing on criminal conduct and real threats, they have chosen to create a system that encourages grievance reporting and expands government monitoring. This program does not protect the public. It trains the public to spy on each other. It creates distrust. It chills speech. It empowers bureaucracy. And it lays the groundwork for future expansion.

Durham residents should be demanding immediate transparency and accountability. Who oversees this database? Who has access? How long is the data stored? What prevents integration with other municipal systems? What safeguards exist against malicious reporting? What rights do accused individuals have? What oversight exists to ensure this program is not weaponized politically? These questions are not optional. They are essential. Because once a government builds the infrastructure to monitor its own citizens, it rarely gives that power back.

This is not about safety. This is not about inclusion. This is about control. And as a Pickering Councillor, I will oppose any initiative that moves our communities closer to a culture of surveillance, anonymous reporting, and bureaucratic profiling. History has already shown us where these systems lead, and Canadians should not tolerate them at any level of government. Not federally. Not provincially. And certainly not locally. If we want a safe society, we enforce laws against real crime. We do not build Orwellian programs that encourage residents to report each other in the shadows. That is not progress. That is regression. And if we do not stop it now, we will one day look back and wonder how we let it happen.

So I ask the people of Durham: when is enough enough? How many red flags do you need before you recognize the direction we are heading? Because the slow demise of Durham will not happen overnight — it will happen one program, one policy, and one surrendered freedom at a time.



# THE Mr. Files

By John Mutton  
CENTRAL EXCLUSIVE

## Karmageddon

By Mr. ‘X’ ~ John Mutton  
CENTRAL EXCLUSIVE

### Opinion: Municipalities need economists, not just accountants

Municipal governments in Ontario are widely regarded as financially disciplined. Balanced-budget requirements, strong audit practices and conservative debt management have created a culture of fiscal caution. That discipline has value. But in an era defined by housing shortages, infrastructure pressures and constrained revenue tools, caution alone is no longer sufficient. Most municipalities structure their finance departments around accounting expertise. Treasurers and chief financial officers are typically trained in audit compliance, financial reporting and budget administration. Their mandate is to ensure that spending aligns with revenues, that reserves are properly allocated and that statutory requirements are met. These functions are essential. But they are not economic modelling.

Accounting is, by nature, retrospective. It records and categorizes what has occurred. Economic modelling, by contrast, attempts to forecast behavioural responses to policy decisions. An accountant asks whether the budget balances. An economist asks what will happen if a variable changes. The distinction matters. Municipal councils today are routinely making decisions about development charges, property-tax rates, infrastructure financing and long-term debt issuance. These decisions influence housing supply, business location, migration patterns and assessment growth. They shape the local economy for decades. Yet many municipalities approach these questions primarily through an accounting lens. Consider development charges. When rates are increased to fund capital projects, the financial logic is straightforward: growth should pay for growth. But what is the elasticity effect? At what point do higher charges suppress housing starts? How does that affect long-term assessment growth?

Could a lower rate generate higher total revenue over time? These are economic questions. They

require modelling. The same applies to property-tax policy. What level of increase begins to influence business investment decisions? How sensitive are commercial properties to tax differentials across municipal borders? How do households respond to cumulative cost pressures? Without economic forecasting, councils risk making technically balanced but economically inefficient decisions. The consequences are rarely immediate. A budget can be balanced while housing starts decline. Debt ratios can appear manageable while assessment growth slows. Tax rates can rise incrementally without recognizing the point at which competitiveness erodes. Over time, however, these effects compound. Senior levels of government routinely integrate economic modelling into fiscal policy decisions. Provincial and federal ministries publish forecasts, stress-test assumptions and examine behavioural impacts before implementing major changes. Municipal governments, which now manage increasingly complex infrastructure and growth mandates, should do the same. This does not mean replacing treasurers with economists. Accounting discipline remains indispensable. But municipalities would benefit from institutionalizing economic expertise alongside traditional finance functions. An in-house municipal economist – or a formalized economic modelling unit – could evaluate development-charge sensitivity, tax elasticity, infrastructure return on investment and long-term debt sustainability under varying growth and interest-rate scenarios. Major fiscal decisions would then be informed not only by compliance requirements, but by forward-looking analysis. Ontario’s municipalities are being asked to grow faster, build more housing and maintain affordability, often with limited fiscal tools. In that environment, optimizing spreadsheets is not enough. Municipal governance must evolve from budget management to economic strategy. Balancing the books is necessary. Modelling the future is essential.

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